

# **Town of Newbury, New Hampshire**



**MUNICIPAL RESOURCES INC.**

Services for Effective Government

## **Fire Services Organizational Analysis March 2006**


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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Town of Newbury, New Hampshire, covers approximately 35.8 square miles of land area and 2.3 square miles of inland water area. Located in Merrimack County, Newbury has a base population of approximately 2,000. During the summer and winter months the population swells significantly to a seasonal population of approximately 8,000. Newbury is served by an on-call fire service organization composed of 35 members, of which 25 are active and 15 of the 25 are also trained as Emergency Medical Technicians. Only a few on-call personnel are available for weekday, daytime response. During our visits to Newbury we were continually impressed with the dedication and caliber of personnel. Clearly these folks care about both the Department and the community. As we interacted with various members of the department it was common to see a passion for both the fire service and community of Newbury. Clearly these folks care about both the Department and the community.

The population of Newbury has grown by 89 percent between 1970 and 1980.  Newbury contains 48.6 persons per square mile. The Town is governed by a Board of Selectmen with the assistance of a Town Administrator. Community students are enrolled in the Kearsarge Regional School District. There are no public schools within the confines of the Town. The community has a population with over 90% having a high school diploma and over 40% with a bachelor's degree or higher. The largest employers are in the recreational industry.

Based upon the 1997 Newbury Master Plan, five recommendations were brought forward and are commented on in this report. These include:

- Establish a Capital Improvement Program
- Develop a South Fire Station
- Hiring a small compliment of career firefighters to augment daytime response
- Identify and establish a network of available water supply
- Continue fiscal support for the Bradford Rescue Squad

An analysis of National Fire Protection Association averages for communities of Newbury's size and organization indicates that the Fire Department should have:

- 2.36 pumpers
- 2 stations



- 37 volunteer personnel

During our visits, we discovered that, almost universally, members acknowledge that over the past five years serious divisions within the Department have materialized that negatively affect the ability of the Department to carry out its mission effectively. All members agree that the Newbury's government and citizens support them fully, so the reasons for the issues within the Fire Department are internal in nature. We found individual officers and members to be unquestionably dedicated to the Department and the Town.

Years ago, the Department was one big family where socialization occurred inside and outside the Fire Department . But, as in the normal course of life, changes occur within the family related to demands of work, re-location due to spousal situations or new life experiences, and about one half the Department membership drifted away from the core group. A chasm developed and the differences that perhaps always existed were accentuated.

Leadership then became the focal point. Electing the leaders became controversial and further exacerbated the growing rift in the Department. As expressed to us, about one half the members are active now, and about one half either do not come to training or calls, or drift in and out. Combine this with the nationwide experience where daytime responses in volunteer Fire Departments are diminished anyways, and you have a situation whereby there are just too few members available for daytime weekday calls.

Fire training and officer training needs to be formalized (EMS training was characterized as pretty good). Within the Department, EMS needs to be better incorporated into the mainstream, with equipment needs and an officer structure recognized and addressed.

The Town is taking positive steps to address some safety issues identified at the Headquarters fire station (diesel generator and diesel exhaust removal system). Beyond that, fire station renovation when the Police Department re-locates is required.

The Tanker needs to be replaced immediately as its failing mechanical condition is delaying the transport of water to fire scenes (fails to start on calls). We recommended that the Town pursue this replacement in the upcoming federal FireAct Grant process, and are assisting the Department by reviewing the grant application. However, if Newbury fails to acquire the grant (only 10% of those applying for apparatus are awarded), the Town should set aside capital funds to purchase a Tanker. Beyond this, new personal protective equipment for all should be provided (last year's FireAct grant procured PPE for only 2/3 the Department). A thermal imaging camera also should be sought.



Another critical safety item reported was that the radio communications system does not always work properly. The chief reason is due to the mountainous topography that Newbury is situated within and the inability of the radio signals to penetrate into all areas of Town. Many times some of the member's pagers do not activate after toning by the New London Dispatch Center and the radio repeating system installed in Town Hall does not work if it is left in the "DPW mode".

As we conducted the study, we focused upon the following eight areas:

- I. Leadership in the Fire Department
- II. Facility Evaluation
- III. Department Operations
- IV. Apparatus and Equipment
- V. Training
- VI. Communications and Technology
- VII. Public Relations
- VIII. Budget and Financial Management



# **PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

Municipal Resources, Inc. was engaged by the Town of Newbury, New Hampshire to review the operation of the Fire Department to determine how it compares to contemporary public safety department practices and to assess the need for facilities. Herein, we have attempted to produce a report containing recommendations that will assist the Department and the Town to set a clear course of action for future improvement.

To accomplish this, members of the study team held an initial orientation meeting with Town officials and available members of the Department and in partnership with them gathered a variety of statistical information and data on the department. Several days of on-site work, interview and observation in Newbury were performed by MRI consultants.

We looked into such areas as the command structure, chain of command, span of control, recruitment, selection and training, budgeting, recall, service demand, the deployment of personnel, the communications and data processing functions, internal discipline, working relationships with other persons and agencies, responsiveness, internal regulations, facilities and equipment, and compliance with various State and Federal regulations.

Following the on-site visits, data collected and observations made were subjected to analysis by the project team, individually and collectively, and compared with contemporary fire service and public safety practices, in order to formulate the recommendations contained in this report.

We would be remiss in not thanking all of the people of the Town of Newbury government, from the ~~Town Council~~ to the administrative staff of the Town government, to the entire staff of the Newbury Fire Department, for being most cooperative and helpful in assisting us to carry out this work.



## **SCOPE/PURPOSE OF SERVICES**

The work contemplated herein is designed to assist the Fire Department in its desire to provide the highest level of service to all its residents according to national standards, balanced with reasonable, effective costs for personnel, equipment, and related benefits. Accordingly, the study will review and address the following Department issues:

### **1. Leadership of the Fire Department**

- Development of clear recommendations to guide both the Town and the ~~new~~ Fire Chief.
- Produce a series of recommendations designed to enhance the selection and promotion of personnel
- Assess Internal:
  - ❑ Communications
  - ❑ Morale
  - ❑ Internal Conflict
  - ❑ Command Structure

### **2. Facility Evaluation**

- Assess the condition of current fire and dispatch facilities.
- Assess the current level and use of technology within the Newbury Fire Department
- Develop a fiscal timeline that is attainable by the Town of Newbury.

### **3. Department Operations**

- Access safety practices within the Department
- Evaluate current Standard Operating Guidelines
- Assess the effectiveness of the EMS component of Department Operations



#### **4. Apparatus / Equipment**

- Assess current apparatus and equipment
  - What additional apparatus/equipment if any is needed
- Assess current and needed apparatus/equipment according to national standards
- Assess Specialized Responses abilities
  - Assess the Departments abilities, apparatus/equipment to respond to marine and other specialized emergencies
    - What specialized apparatus/equipment is needed

#### **5. Training**

- Evaluation of department training program, and the associated records
- Assess ways to improve staff development
- Identify the best ways in which to develop and integrated training program
- Assess Specialized Operations Training

#### **6. Communications**

- Assess communications equipment
- Assess problems with, equipment, coverage, and building penetration
- Assess and recommend options
- Recommend the development of key policies and procedures pertaining to fire service communications

#### **7. Public Relations**

- Assess and recommend improved venues for better Department publicity
- Assess community outreach efforts





- Develop recommendation to enhance community interaction

## **8. Budget and Financial Management**

- Assess and recommend improved budgeting of financial resources
  - Assess cost effectiveness of incident callback and shift coverage overtime vs. current staffing levels



## The Study Team

The following MRI personnel participated in the study:



### ***Project Manager:***

**Brian P. Duggan** now commands the Fire Department in the City of Northampton, Massachusetts, where he has instituted substantial changes to modernize the entire department including equipment, facilities, personnel, training and organizational structure. He formerly commanded the Northborough, Massachusetts Fire Department, and has significant experience with the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services where he held several key positions. He also developed and directed the Graduate and Undergraduate Fire Science Programs at Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts, from 1995 - 2003. Chief Duggan has a Business Management/Fire Science degree from Providence College, and a Masters Degree of Business Administration (MBA) from Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts. He is also a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program, and is one of only a few fire service professionals to be designated as a Chief Fire Officer by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. Chief Duggan also leads the Massachusetts fire service through his affiliation as Chairman of the Fire Chief Association of Massachusetts Technology Committee and as a Regional Director on the Massachusetts State Fire Mobilization Committee. In addition, he has authored several publications inclusive of writing Section 7, Chapter 3, "*Fire Department Information Systems*" in the Nineteenth Edition of the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Protection Handbook.



### ***MRI Associates:***

**Keith E. Hoyle** has served as a fire Chief in two Massachusetts communities and has extensive fire prevention and safety experience through his years of working within the University of Massachusetts Environmental Health and Safety program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Keith served as Fire Chief within the Town of Franklin from 1994–1999, and currently serves as the Fire Chief in the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts. Keith offers a Masters degree in Fire Administration from the University of New Haven and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. Keith has also worked as a consultant for Bennett Associates and has delivered several promotional assessment centers.



# **RECOMMENDATIONS**


The following details 56 recommendations within the eight areas outlined by the Scope of Work. These recommendations are detailed on the following pages:


## **I. Leadership in the Fire Department**

***I-1. Department is split into at least two factions and must be brought together by the mission of the organization and a sense of common purpose.***

It clearly was pointed out to us by many Department members that there were two camps in the Newbury Fire Department. In order for the Department to continue to be able to deliver quality services to the citizens of Newbury, a process needs to occur that will bring together these factions.


***I-2. Leadership is viewed by the Department as too conservative and as such not a strong advocate for either the needs of the department or the safety of personnel.*** 

***I-3. The Chief needs to be a stronger advocate for the Departments needs.*** 

Most members feel that the  Chief has been too conservative and by trying to save the Town money has compromised the equipment needed for safe and effective operations. In fact most members feel that the equipment purchases come only begrudgingly and are secondary to the true needs of the Town and their safety. Although we feel that the Chief is passionate about his position and is a competent Chief, we do feel that this conservatism has held the department back and has become a major internal issue. As such, the Chief will need to be more inclusive and advocate for the Departments needs as brought forward by the membership.

***I-4. A recognition and awards policy should be developed.*** 

The retention of volunteer personnel is a critical issue and personnel need to understand that they are valued by the Department leadership and the Town.

***I-5. The Chief needs to share budget information and provide the Department membership with a quarterly update relative to fiscal status.*** 



***I-6. The Board of Selectmen should meet with the entire Department twice per year. This provides the perfect forum for recognition and provides and opportunity for the Board to listen to the Department as a whole.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

The Chief should arrange and run these meetings and the Board should not allow this to become and end run around the chain of command. However, the need for open communication and inclusion is very real and must be addressed.

***I-7. A procedure to welcome new members and consistently provide them with information, gear and training should be developed. In addition, the Chief should assign one member to “mentor” each new recruit.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***I-8. The Chief should delegate and assign responsibilities to all officers.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

A common theme was that the Chief is a great guy but has trouble delegating. Compared to similar sized departments we have surveyed the membership as a whole seems to be very isolated and lacks substantive involvement outside of emergency response and the social aspects of the current training program.

***I-9. A policy that allows an issue to be brought forward on a signed issue form, addressed at an officers meeting, the disposition noted and posted in the station should be developed as a means to internally deal with issues.***

As personnel do not feel that they are listened to or heard, this a policy that provides a means to have an issue brought before the officers and addressed is a step in the right direction. However, once an issue is addressed that communication needs to flow back to the person who initiated the concern and the form inclusive of the resolution should be posted in the station. <sup>Λ</sup>

## **II. Facility Evaluation**

***II-1. Fire detection systems monitored by a central station and installed in accordance with NFPA 72 should be installed in both stations.***

As headquarters burned in 1984, we were shocked to find less than a state of the art detection system in place to protect the communities assets. <sup>Λ</sup>

***II-2. An epoxy based traction floor should be added to the headquarters station to prevent falls when that building is renovated.***



The present concrete floors in both stations are very slippery when wet. Although we did not hear a history of injury, experience tells us that without a traction based flooring system it is only a matter of time.

***II-3. Emergency call boxes with a red indicator light over them should be added at the front of both stations. When activated these call boxes should dial 911.***

Presently if no personnel are not at the either station there is no means of alarm transmission. Through the use of a phone line (existing at headquarters) a call box can be added for approximately \$500.00. In addition to the two stations, the Town should also consider placing one of these call boxes at the Lake Sunapee Dock. <sup>Λ</sup>

***II-4. A plan should be developed to relocate the police station to a new building and expand and renovate the existing fire facility to encompass the entire building within two years.***

Concurrent with this renovation, the ability to covert space into sleeping areas should be added for storm coverage, additional office and apparatus space should be provided, traction flooring, fire detection, radio communications and new internal infrastructure should be provided. <sup>Λ</sup>

### **III. Department Operations**

***III-1. Establish a bylaw that provides for the development and expansion of cisterns and dry hydrants in conjunction with new development.***

As Newbury's water system is composed of static sources, these sources need to be increased and maintained in conjunction with the expansion of the community. The Department has been encouraging developers to add these fire protection storage systems over the past several years. <sup>Λ</sup>

***III-2. More fully utilize the ICS system on all calls and enforce the Two In/Two Out OSHA rule.***

Although we were told that ICS is used, the questionnaire and some observations leads us to conclude that more emphasis and practice on this new federal requirement is warranted. Most Department members surveyed did not know what the OSHA Two In/Two Out rule even was.



### ***III-3. The EMS Director should be assigned the rank of Captain.***

As the majority of calls for service are EMS related, more emphasis needs to be paid to this component of the Department, whether some members like it or not. The Director needs to have a rank – preferably Captain (and a vote at officers' meetings), to denote the importance that the EMS role has within the Department and to the citizens of Newbury. <sup>^</sup>

### ***III-4. EMS equipment needs to be purchased on an annual basis.***

Most of the Department's unsolicited donations come about as a result of EMS activity, but little of these funds finds its way into EMS equipment. EMS jackets for members, for example, have been requested for some time to improve safety of firefighters on incident scenes, but are yet to be procured. <sup>^</sup>

### ***III-5. Develop an enforceable protective clothing policy.***

There presently is an SOG covering the wearing of protective gear at all incident scenes, but as related to us by many members, it is not enforced. Further, the FAST members have no high visibility jackets to wear at accident scenes, and their safety is compromised. <sup>^</sup>

### ***III-6. Elections need to be open with results posted.***

The last elections were controversial, with many members upset at perceived inequities in the process. <sup>^</sup>

## **IV. Apparatus and Equipment**

### ***IV-1. New currently compliant personal protective gear should be purchased for all personnel and replaced at most, every ten (10) years (depending upon wear).***

In 2005, a federal FIRE Act grant was awarded to the Newbury Fire Department, but only for 20 members instead of everyone. The reasoning was that a few members already had "good" gear so everyone did not need new. This reasoning is one of the issues cited by members as detrimental to the Department's good. All members should



have the latest NFPA standard. Gear even five years old and newer does not meet that standard.

***IV-2. EMS jackets compliant to the NFPA standard should be purchased immediately for all ~~FAST~~ members. Visibility and blood-borne pathogen/body fluid issues need to be addressed.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***IV-3. Continue to purchase new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for every seated position on apparatus, through the Town's Capital Replacement Program.***

The 2005 federal FIRE Act grant purchased 10 new SCBA but this program should be continued annually so that there is only one type prevalent in the Department. Multiple SCBA models is a training and operational nightmare. <sup>Λ</sup>

***IV-4. Purchase a thermal imaging camera in FY2007.***

These devices are a life-safety must, both for citizens and firefighters. In addition, they can limit damage to structures as firefighters can utilize them to pinpoint fire travel. <sup>Λ</sup>

***IV-5. The 1977 Tanker should be replaced immediately.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

This apparatus has failed to start numerous times and is important to deliver water to fire scenes. We are recommending that a federal FIRE Act grant be sought to accomplish this and are assisting in this process. However, only one in ten apparatus awards are made, so Newbury should plan to purchase a new tanker if the federal grant does not materialize.

***IV-6. The 1978 Ford pumper at the Blodgett station should be replaced as soon as possible after the Tanker.***

*It should be replaced with a smaller 4 wheel drive mini-pumper with foam capacity and housed at Blodgett. This vehicle will make quick access to the lake homes that are located within close proximity to each other and will be able to deliver a quick knock-down to prevent spread of fire from one exposure to another. And, for the large homes in the newer developments with long driveways, the mini-pumper again can make quick access with a good knock-down capability.* <sup>Λ</sup>



***IV-7. The boat and its associated equipment should be maintained.***

*Many members reported that the boat is missing fire related equipment and is not being kept in a ready state at all times.*

***IV-8. Replace the 1988 pumper in 2015.***

*The 1988 pumper will be 30 years old in two years, and often apparatus in smaller Departments is recommended to be replaced by then (20 years in larger Departments). However, with Newbury immediately needing to replace the Tanker and then Engine 4 soon after, the 1988 pumper will need to be maintained well into the next decade – probably into FY2015.*

***IV-9. The DPW uses Engine 4 out of Blodgett to clean culverts, but often returns it nearly empty of fuel and sometimes does not re-attach attack hoselines.***

We recognize that smaller communities need to share resources but an emergency piece of equipment like fire apparatus needs to be able to respond in a ready state at all times. If the DPW cannot abide by this, then they should not be able to use the truck. In any event, when Engine 4 is replaced, perhaps the DPW should take it for their maintenance purposes.

## **V. Training**

***V-1. A formalized fire training program is needed.***

NFPA subject matter should be utilized to design the program, with content assistance from a myriad of resources available (IFSTA, New Hampshire Fire Academy, Texas A&M, etc.). Lesson plans with goals and objectives should be developed for all drills. The Training Officer needs to keep up to date training records for each individual member of the Department.

***V-2. Instructor certifications should be acquired.***

Instructors should be cultivated from within and outside the Department. Certifications through the New Hampshire Fire Academy should be pursued so that eventually, only certified personnel are teaching to Department members (for liability reasons).





### ***V-3. A Training Schedule should be posted.***

Every 6 months, a training schedule should be posted in advance so members know subject matter to be covered.

### ***V-4. ICS/NIMS***

By FY2007, the federal government requires that all emergency departments, including health, DPW and the town administration (Select Boards, administrators, etc.), to be trained in NIMS. Department ICS also must be NIMS conforming. <sup>^</sup>

### ***V-5. Officers must receive specialized training.***

Often times, incidents can go right or wrong depending upon the decisions made by officers arriving first. Often times, interpersonal issues between members can go right or wrong depending upon the first actions officers take mitigating these situations. Formal officer training is critical. The New Hampshire Fire Academy and National Fire Academy, among others, have excellent training in this regard and should be utilized.

### ***V-6. Accountability Training***

It is most important for all firefighters to receive firefighter safety and accountability training. If we cannot protect our own, how can we protect the public? Again, the New Hampshire Fire Academy, National Fire Academy and a host of other recognized institutions offer these programs. The Newbury Fire Department has an "Accountability" SOG, but testimony from some members questions whether it is complied with all the time. <sup>^</sup>

### ***V-7. Driver and Pump Operator Certification.***

All drivers and pump operators should receive formal training and skills check-offs. There are available programs from the Fire Academies or commercially-available to assist in this process. <sup>^</sup>

### ***V-8. Develop training materials for Department use.***



Initiate a small library of materials for Department use, including IFSTA, NFPA and others. Participation with other Fire Departments to share resources is encouraged. <sup>Λ</sup>

***V-9. Training Attendance should be mandated.***

All members should be required to attend at least 65% of all training sessions. <sup>Λ</sup>

***V-10. The Department's principal Training Officer should receive a stipend.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

Observation - EMS training was reportedly excellent. This effort should continue as a majority of the Department's responses are EMS related.

***V-11. Recruitment & Training Coordinator***

Before any career personnel are hired (FY2009), there should be a ½ time Recruitment and Training Officer hired (FY2007) to coordinate training and all recruitment efforts for the FAST members and firefighters. <sup>Λ</sup>

## **VI. Communications and Technology**

***Vi-1. Over a period of two years provide new portable radios to all EMS personnel.***

Based on topography Newbury seems to have a moderate level of communications issues. However, after speaking with the majority of the department it appears much of this problem may be found within the quality of the equipment. As such, we have produced several recommendations aimed at monitoring and resolving this situation. <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI – 2. Replace personal pagers and portable radios with new high quality equipment purchased by the Town.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

In an effort to provide the best possible service it seems that several first responders have purchased their own pagers and portable radios. Although well intentioned this



equipment may not be of the quality necessary and we recommend that this equipment be replaced with Motorola HT 1250 portables and Minitor V pagers. <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-3. Task the Police Chief with monitoring and resolving the frequency penetration and communications equipment malfunction issues.***

As an experienced professional, we feel that the Police Chief could work to resolve this situation. All reports of radio problems should be directed to him and all radios purchases should be approved by him. <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-4. The Fiscal 2007 FireAct Grant application should focus on the replacement of communication gear to permanently resolve the situation that presently exists.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-5. Departmental informational announcements should be increased through the dispatch center.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-6. All pagers should be tested on a daily basis through tones generated from the dispatch center.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-7. A National Fire Incident Reporting System software packages should be purchased and installed on two work stations within headquarters.***

Presently the department lacks all but the most basic technology. A software package such as Firehouse Software can be reasonably purchased and will allow all reports to be completed electronically. In addition, the station should be equipped with at least two computers and have a notebook computer available for training applications. <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-8. A computer network that connects the department computers and connects to the Town should be created.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-9. An LCD projector should be purchased and ceiling mounted.*** <sup>Λ</sup>

***VI-10. – A Notebook computer should be purchased to support the Department's training program.***

This technology is essential to support a modern training program as most current media is in the form of PowerPoint presentations or can be found on DVDs. These tools can promote learning and provide the department with the ability to access current programs. <sup>Λ</sup>



## **VII. Public Relations**

Although the Department is a well respected part of the Town of Newbury, public relations serve as an ongoing means of education and provide the citizens an opportunity to understand the role and mission of the Fire Department. A part of public relations also encompasses recruitment.

### ***VII -1. Develop an organized recruitment program.***

In the short term, this program should be developed and administered by the ½ time training officer. Once full time staff are added in Fiscal 2009 this responsibility should become one of the most important assignments of career personnel.

### ***VII-2. Hold an annual open house in conjunction with the peak summer season.***

Based upon the unique nature of the community, the open house should be held during the summer so that the most residents have the opportunity to become familiar with the department. In addition to the peak volume, the summer offers a wide variety of opportunities to create educational based activities for children. <sup>^</sup>

### ***VII-3. Provide a Department presence and informational presence at all significant Town events.***

## **VIII. Budget and Financial Management**

As the Town continues to grow and the daytime availability of personnel is reduced, a small contingent of career firefighters should be considered. However, this evolution should be approached based upon need and over the next five years.

### ***VIII-1. One fulltime person should be added to the department for daytime coverage in Fiscal 2009.*** <sup>^</sup>

### ***VIII-2 – A second fulltime firefighter should be added to the department for daytime coverage in Fiscal 2011.***



***VIII-3. Insurance should be provided to cover property loss or injury while an individual is responding to an emergency call in their privately owned vehicle.***

We heard of at least one instance where a responder became involved in an accident while enroute to a call and the Town refused to compensate him for personal injury and property loss. Apparently this situation highlighted a lack of coverage and should be addressed. <sup>^</sup>

***VIII-4. – The EMS Gift Fund should be tracked by the Town however, this fund should be available to the Department to purchase equipment and continue the current uses of that account.***

Presently this account is managed by the Department. This is not a good business practice as it invites fiscal issues. We are dealing with one community in which a similar situation found that over \$289,000 in EMS revenue had been embezzled over a period of six years. Clearly we have no question about the integrity or use of the account. However having the Town oversee this account is a preferable practice. <sup>^</sup>



# **Employee Questionnaire**

The following represents the data collected from an anonymous employee study that was completed by those employees who we were unable to interview in person.

## **Response Key:**

**Each answer has a number beside it if more than one person answered the same.**

The following instrument was used in soliciting responses in various topical areas from Department members who responded (all supposedly were furnished with the survey – 13 responded). For items requiring a 1-10 answer - 1 is worst and 10 is best. Multiple similar answers to the same questions are delineated by a (-) with the number of those responses following.

### **1. *What is the biggest issue to impact the Department over the past 3 years?***

Don't know – 6  
Lack of leadership – 2  
Fire training needs improving  
Protective gear poor  
Got a new Rescue Truck  
There's been no change  
FIRE grant acquired to replace some gear  
Attract and keep younger FFs

### **2. *Rate the Fire Department (1-10):***

1 - 1  
3 - 3  
6 - 1  
7 - 1  
8 - 3  
9 - 3  
10 - 1



**3. What would make the Department a perfect “10”?**

Better fire training – 4  
Better leadership – 3  
New tanker – 2  
Improve attitudes – 2  
Need more FFs  
Better communications among people  
Better equipment  
FFs accept more responsibility

**4. How would you rate inter-Department communications?**

2 - 1  
3 - 1  
4 - 1  
5 - 3  
7 - 1  
8 - 2  
9 - 1  
10 - 3

**5. Is the physical environment (station) conducive to professionalism?**

Yes – 8  
No – station not well organized  
Clean and paint  
Space is getting tight

**6. How would you rate morale?**

1 - 2  
3 - 1  
4 - 1  
5 - 1  
7 - 2  
8 - 1  
9 - 2  
10 - 3



**6. If you rate morale low, what can be done to improve it?**

Better fire training – 3  
Improve verbal and written communications – 2  
Nothing – 2  
Respond in full PPE at all times  
Use chain of command  
Better overall attitudes  
Let the Lieutenants be officers  
Better leadership  
Officers need to be positive role models  
Show up for calls and drills

**7. What services not now provided by the Department should be?**

None – 4  
Extrication tools needed for extrication – 2  
Enforce members responding in full PPE  
Start a “stay overnight in station” program  
Cleaning system for protective gear  
Sports – start a softball team to play other departments  
Not sure

**9. Rate training:**

1 - 3  
2 - 1  
3 - 1  
7 - 1  
8 - 2  
9 - 3  
10 - 2

**10. Rate Personal Protective Gear:**

0 - 1  
1 - 1  
2 - 2  
3 - 1  
5 - 2  
10 - 6





**11. Rate apparatus:**

2 - 1  
3 - 1  
4 - 1  
7 - 1  
8 - 4  
9 - 5

**12. If you could change 1 thing about the Department, what would it be?**

Professional leadership – 3  
New tanker – 3  
Fulltime coverage daytimes  
Get FFs and Lieutenants more involved  
Better fire training  
M-2 as first due apparatus  
New fire station

**13. How do you feel the Town supports the Fire Department?**

2 - 2  
4 - 1  
5 - 1  
6 - 1  
7 - 1  
8 - 1  
9 - 3  
10 – 2

**14. What are the three most pressing problems in the Department?**

Fire training – 3  
New tanker – 3  
Leadership and officer training – 2  
Better fire station – 2  
Better radio system  
Better dispatching  
Personal protective gear  
Increase in training demands on all FFs  
Increase in paperwork



Increase in required inspections by law or regulation  
Staying abreast of changes in technology and operations in fire and EMS  
Pumper should not be used by Highway Department  
FFs injured and lack of insurance/wages coverage by Town  
Better equipment  
Lack of personal communications  
Lack of response to calls by personnel  
No pre-plans for commercial buildings  
Lack of long range planning  
Proper instructors for fire training

**15. *Are the radios and communications systems adequate?***

Buy portable radios for everyone – 4  
They are good – 2  
Need more training on radio systems and radios – 2  
Yes – 2  
Need an all-new system  
Sometimes pager do not work  
Sometimes mobiles don't work  
Not everyone has radios  
Many "dead spots" in town  
All officers should have portable radios  
Tanker has no portable radio  
Equip each seated position on apparatus with portables  
Need a new base radio  
Need new portable radios  
The mobiles are good

**16. *Does the "chain of command" at Newbury Fire work?***

Yes – 7  
Yes, but officers need more training on it  
Yes, but Lieutenants need to learn they are all equal  
No structure and no training  
I think so if you can hear the radio  
No



**17. Do issues exist which negatively affect your safety?**

No – 7  
Response times need improvement  
Lack of adequate training  
Tanker is poor  
Inadequate personnel protective gear  
FAST team is inadequately funded  
Staffing is down during the daytime hours

**18. What is the quality of dispatching services?**

They are great - 2  
New London is “so-so” - 2  
Good  
Fair to good  
Not great – not poor  
Dead spots  
Improve their professionalism  
Do not always get the dispatch  
They usually do not know the cross streets  
No fireground channel  
Sometimes talk too fast  
Less than adequate  
Fair to poor

**19. Do you feel that the Department values and advocates for you?**

Yes – 8  
No – 2  
Don't know  
Keep the budget too low and worry more about taxes  
Don't care about EMS

**20. Explain what “Two In/Two Out” is?**

FFs work in pairs – when one leaves the building, the other one has to go too – 8  
When 2 FFs enter the building, 2 more must be readily available outside – 2  
Don't waste my time



**21. Describe the Personal Accountability system in the Newbury Fire Department?**

Tag system – 7  
It's good – 2  
No idea  
Exists but it is hard to run  
None

**22. What can be done for little or no \$ that could have a profound impact upon the Department and the Town?**

Improve attendance  
Better fire training  
“Because we’ve always done it this way” has to go  
Have EMS officers too  
Pre-plan high hazard occupancies  
Leadership training  
Long-range planning  
Too many to list  
Donated forestry truck  
Better my own health

**23. Anything else you would like to add?**

Move E-2 to first due and E-3 to 2<sup>nd</sup> due  
More SCBA training  
Pre-plan!  
Improve over-all training and have officer training regularly  
Need long range planning  
Cross-lay on E-3 has 100 ft. of hose – useless!  
Budget request should be done by more than 1 person  
Need a formal training schedule – not just pumping all the time  
Train per NFPA subject matter  
I do not feel safe any more  
Officers do not use our suggestions  
Purchase more equipment for the EMS section – they get more donations  
Town has grown a lot in 10 years and we have done a good job keeping up – but we need to remember our roots and values and not lower them to the new people's standards. We can change slowly but intelligently!



# **APPENDIX A**

## **ABREVIATED MANAGEMENT LETTER**



**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**Fire Department Management Letter**

January 1, 2006

Mr. Dennis Pavlick, Town Administrator  
Town of Newbury  
Newbury, NH

Dear Mr. Pavlick:

As we have discussed, the draft report will be completed by early March 2006. We are writing to provide you with a management letter that outlines several areas that should be immediately addressed by both yourself and the Board of Selectmen. These concerns are based on a combination of interviews with department members and our direct observations. These issues along with our associated recommendations are listed below:

**Department Elections**

**Issue** – Many members told us about the 2005 election and brought forward a concern that this was a closed election where the results were hidden. Although it may be a long standing practice to not publish the results it raises internal suspicion.

**Recommendation** – The Board of Selectmen should require that election results be presented to the Town and published within the station. While we have no concern over the validity of the last election, an open system is essential to morale.

**Emergency Medical Service Fund Oversight**

**Issue** – Donations are placed into an account managed by the Department. Neither the Town nor the membership knows the balance or use of this fund.

**Recommendation** – This fund should be managed by the Town and utilized by the Department without restriction. Clearly, this money is donated to support a program for the public good and as it is privately managed in a manner that lacks open disclosure,



the Town should provide oversight but continue to allow these funds to be utilized for the annual dinner and other service based activities and equipment.

## **Station Generator**

**Issue** – The current generator is not automated and has produced Carbon Monoxide within the station.

**Recommendation** – The Board of Selectmen should order the current generator removed. A permanent and automatic exterior generator should be installed. In the interim, a portable generator on the exterior of the building should be temporarily connected when power is lost.

## **Diesel Exhaust System**

**Issue** – Neither station has a diesel exhaust system. As diesel exhaust is carcinogenic this is a high priority health and safety issue.

**Recommendation** – An overhead automatic, air cuff direct connect vehicle exhaust system such as a Plymovent system should be installed at the Headquarters station. This should be done in a way that this equipment could be either moved or incorporated into the eventual renovation of the fire station.

## **Training**

**Issue** – Although Emergency Medical training is excellent, fire training is all but non-existent. We observed an excellent fire training session but the membership was quick to point out to our observer that this was not a normal condition. The Training program lacks organization; planning, a schedule, and lesson plan driven instruction. As a result, documented training is far from meeting the minimum national standards. The Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator should immediately engage this situation as it places both the Town and the firefighters at risk.

**Recommendation** – The Board should direct the Fire Chief to produce, post and provide a copy of a training schedule three months in advance (although the Chief bears this responsibility these tasks should be delegated to his officers), provide the Board with a written report pertaining to training attendance, and provide a lesson plan for each training session on a monthly basis. In addition the Fire Chief should be



required to document for the Town how members will be given all required training and attain the annual training outlined in the National Fire Protection Associations Standard 1001.

## **Communications**

**Issue** – Many members reported that their pagers do not work intermittently; we don't believe that this is an equipment issue with the pagers but a radio coverage issue. We are aware that the Police Chief has been tasked to address this issue and he should be fully supported in this effort.

**Recommendation** – Ask the Police Chief to provide the Board with an update and report relative to the status of this situation. Require the Fire Chief to track the number of times and locations where a members pager does not work properly. This information should be shared with the Police Chief so that they can work together to resolve this situation.

## **EMS Director Status**

**Issue** – Providing Emergency Medical Care is in reality the major focus of the Newbury Fire Department. However, the EMS Director has no rank and is not allowed to vote at officers meetings. Normally, we would include a discussion of this within our final report. However, we are concerned that this inequity creates at the very least a perception of discrimination that should be of concern to the Town.

**Recommendation** – The EMS Director should be allowed to vote at officers meetings and provided with identification on her turnout gear that differentiates her from a firefighter. As an example, the shield on her helmet could be appropriately marked and reflective lettering could be added to her turnout coat that would clearly indicate her role as the EMS Director. In the longer term, this position should be given rank of a Captain.

## **FireAct Grant Application**

**Issue** – Federal FireAct applications are due by March 31, 2006. Newbury stands an excellent chance of attaining a grant to replace the aging tanker that seems to have chronic mechanical issues. As this is potentially the last year of this grant program, it is





essential that this grant application be properly developed and ready for electronic submission.

**Recommendation** - A member should be assigned to develop this grant within the timeframe mentioned above. Given that this is potentially the last year of this program, the stakes are high and either our firm or a grant writer should be contracted to provide assistance with this project and thereby maximize the probability of success.

We look forward to delivering the full report in the month of March. Please contact me if you would like to schedule a presentation concurrent with the delivery of this report.

Sincerely,

Brian P. Duggan



# **APPENDIX B**

## **EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE**





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## MUNICIPAL RESOURCES, INC.

MEREDITH, NH 03253 603-279-0352

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**TO: ALL NEWBURY FIRE PERSONNEL**

**FROM: MRI REVIEW TEAM**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW ASSESSMENT and QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DATE: OCTOBER 2005**

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As you know, Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) has been engaged by the Town to undertake a review and assessment of the operations and management of the Newbury Fire Department. This memo tells you a little about us and a lot about how you can participate in this review. First, a little about us:

MRI is a New Hampshire organization dedicated exclusively to providing management and operations consulting services to cities and towns throughout New England. All of the principals at MRI have a significant experience in a wide range of government responsibilities.

We would greatly appreciate your filling out the attached questionnaire. In the enclosed questionnaire, you get to talk and we listen.

**Please take the time to work through the attached questionnaire and return it by mail to the following address:**

Brian Duggan  
63 Woodland Drive  
Florence, MA 01062-9621

**You can choose to return it anonymously or not as you see fit. If you would prefer to fax it, our fax # is 413-582-1329.**



**Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.**



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**MRI QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEWBURY  
FIRE DEPARTMENT STUDY**

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**Please complete and place in the addressed stamped envelope addressed to MRI and mail to: Brian Duggan, 63 Woodland Drive, Florence, MA 01062-9621, or fax to 413-582-1329.**

- 1. What is the biggest issue that has impacted your Department organization over the past 3 years? Was it positive or negative? Why?**

- 2. On a scale of one to ten (with 10 the best), how would you rate your Department as a place to work?**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

- 3. What things need to be done in order to make # 2 above a perfect 10?**

- 4. On a scale of one to ten (with 10 the best), how would you rate communication within the Department from your place within the organization.**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

- 5. Do you feel that the physical working environment is conducive to your professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness? What could be done to improve it?**

- 6. On a scale of one to ten (10 is best), how would you rate the morale of the Department?**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

- 7. If you rated #6 low, what needs to be done to improve the situation?**

- 8. What services, if any, which are not currently provided by the Department do you feel should be provided by the Department? Why?**

- 9. On a scale of one to ten (with 10 the highest), how would you rate your training opportunities?**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**



**10. On a scale of one to ten (with 10 the highest), how would you rate your personal Protective equipment (PPE)?**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**11. On a scale of one to ten (with 10 the highest) how would you rate the Department's Apparatus?**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**12. If you could change something about your Department what would it be? Why?**

**13. On a scale of one to ten (with 10 the highest) how do you feel the Town supports the Newbury Fire Department?**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**14. What are the 3 most pressing problems of the Department?**

**15. Would you rate communication systems (radios) within the Department as adequate? If not, why not?**

**16. Does the chain of command in the Newbury Fire Department work? [Explain]**

**17. Do any issues exist which you feel impact your safety and the safety of the community?**

**18. What is your perception of the quality of dispatching?**

**19. Do you feel that the department values and advocates for you?**

**20. Explain what two in, two out means?**

**21. Describe the personnel accountability system in the Newbury Fire Department.**



22. Sometimes the smallest changes can have a profound positive impact - can you name a few little things that could be done for little or no \$ that would dramatically improve or at least contribute to improving the situation for you in your Department?

Please feel free to add pages as needed or address other issues you feel are relevant to the study.

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Optional info about you:

Name	Age:	Years of service	Job Title
<b>Current assignment</b>	<b>Education level: HS HS+ AA BA MA MA+</b>		



## **APPENDIX C**

### **EXAMPLE TRAINING SCHEDULE**







# Southwick Fire Department

## Training Schedule

January – February 2005

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic of Instruction</u>	<u>Instructor(s)</u>	<u>EMT Credit Hours</u>
January 6	19:00	CPR Recertification	Lt. Norris	None
January 13	19:00	Ventilation & Truck Company Operations	Capt. Clark	None
January 14	19:00	Officers Meeting	Chief Hurley	None
January 18 Saturday	10:00 – 12:00	Informal Crew Training Ice Rescue Practical Training	FF. Smith	4 credit hours
January 20	19:00	Fire Association Meeting	Dep. Nichols	None
January 27	19:00	Hazardous Materials Operational Level Recertification	Dep. Nichols	8 credit hours
February 3	19:00	Hazardous Materials Operational Level Recertification	Dep. Nichols	See above
February 10	19:00	SCBA Review, Search and Rescue Team Competition	Capt. Curtin	6 credit hours
February 11	19:00	Officers Meeting	Dep. Clement	None
February 15 Saturday	10:00-12:00	Informal Crew Training Power Tool and Small Engine Review & Practical Application	FF. Jones	None
February 17	19:00	Fire Association Meeting	Capt. Pelis	None
– February 24	19:00	Industrial Fire Attack – Deploying handlines into a smoke filled structure	Lt. Lesko	None

# **APPENDIX D**

## **EXAMPLE AWARDS POLICY**



**POLICY**Revision Number 1 Dated: September 1, 2001**Employee Recognition & Awards**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

The following awards are established for exceptional service by members of the Northampton Fire Department:

Medal of Valor – To be awarded for an act which involves extreme risk to the life of a department member and which is performed above and beyond the call of duty.

Medal of Honor for Distinguished Service – To be awarded for an act which involves risk to the life of a department member but which is performed under conditions described as less hazardous than those constituting valorous action. The distinction between valorous and distinguished service is made in the “beyond the call of duty” circumstance and in the degree of risk involved to the member.

Medal for Meritorious Service – To be awarded for an act which results in the saving of a life, but which involves limited danger to the department member performing the act.

Chief's Commendation – To be awarded for an act giving evidence of selfless conduct by a department member during a time of crisis or emergency but which is less than a valorous, distinguished, or meritorious act in nature, or an act evidencing highly professional conduct or judgment at the Chief's discretion.

Letter of Recognition – To be awarded for exceptional performance by a Group or Individual.

Employee of the Year – Every year the senior staff will nominate an outstanding employee. A committee will then review and rank the nomination once an employee is selected. A certificate will be given with an appropriate award approved by the Fire Committee.

All awards to members of the Northampton Fire Department above the Chief's Commendation will be reviewed by the Fire Committee. All awards will be accompanied by written documentation, which details the action leading to the award. Copies of this documentation will be placed in the department member's personnel file, and the original copies will be presented to the member.